Volume C No. 3 March 22, 1974 50 cents

commonweal

Fiftieth Anniversary Year

MORAL CONSISTENCY AND ABORTION
ROBERT EDELSTEIN
EDWARD S. HERMAN
MARY W. HERMAN

DEFUSING THE PRESIDENCY
SISYPHUS

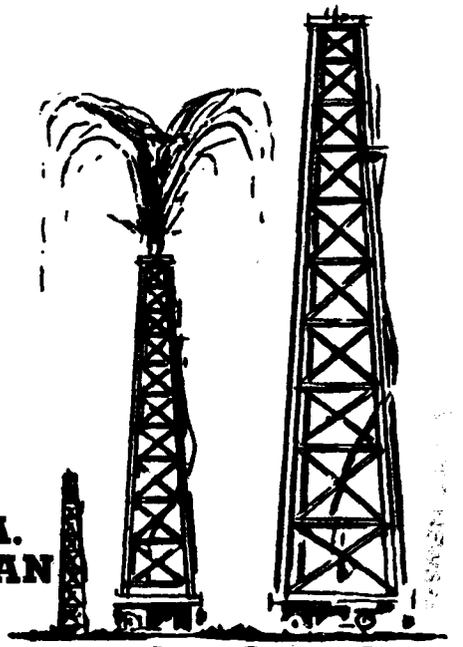
THE NOT SO OPEN CHURCH
MICHAEL NOVAK

THE PRESIDENT ON TELEVISION
MICHAEL MURRAY

SCREEN: BLACK COMEDY
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

CHESTERTON AND THE TRUTH OF '74
DENNIS O'BRIEN

JESUITS, ANGLICANS AND FAIRBANKS
JOHN RATTE, BERNARD BERGONZI, DAVID DENBY



JAMES A. GOODMAN

OIL INDIGESTION

M-1209 12-74
ST CHARLES SEM LIB
CARTHAGENA STA
CELINA OH 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWS & VIEWS

Only in America

Manchester Guardian's Simon Winchester visited New Mexico, the state which gave the world the atom bomb, and discovered its residents "tremendously proud" of the state's "terrible child."

Nowhere was this pride more apparent, Winchester wrote, than at the National Atomic Museum on Kirkland Airforce Base in Albuquerque.

There Winchester encountered Fat Man, Lulu, Davey Crockett, Honest John and Bullpup among more than 50 full-size atomic weapons. And he found the museum walls lovingly papered with the pictures and comments of recent visitors, including children from the Lowell School kindergarten.

"I particularly liked Fat Man," one child wrote. Another: "I liked your film very much. You have nice rockets and nice bombs. Thank you. Love, Joe Tomes." Another: "Thank you for showing the film about how the Americans bombed Hiroshima and slautered (sic) millions of people, demolished their homes and their cities."

A faint note of cynicism might seem to creep into the latter note, Winchester remarked, "but the fact that its author was only 7 and that the museum feels fits to hang it in pride of place quickly dispels that notion."

The visitor's book was found equally remarkable. "Excellent." "Have been here three times already, love it." "Restroom still too narrow for a wheelchair." "Better to be armed than slaved"; that from a gentleman from Texas. "Very depressing," said a visitor from Connecticut — "obviously," said Winchester, "another of those bleeding-heart East Coast liberals." A rhymer penned: "A blast from the past—really neat."

"So that is how New Mexico sells the bomb," Winchester sums up, "and the response is predictably bloodthirsty, and for Mrs. Carrol Canfield, the nice middle-aged lady who runs the place, particularly satisfying. She gives everyone who leaves a slip of paper asking which area they found most interesting, which should be emphasized more, and were all the questions answered satisfactorily? Respondents ask why there are no models to take home with them, where they can buy films of bombs actually going off, and how can one calculate the number of people that will be killed by a blast. Ah, Mrs. Canfield says sweetly in answer to that, and she takes the child by the hand to a large circular chart. 'There you are honey,' she says, 'that will tell you how many will die all the way around ground zero.' And anyone more curious can write to the Rand Corporation for a bomb damage calculator, a small plastic computer that is splendid fun to play with during boring lectures about the meaning of life and so forth."

Julie at the 'Post'

Maxine Cheshire reports in her syndicated column that Robert Rich, a former colleague of Julie Nixon Eisenhower on the *Saturday Evening Post*, withdrew an article about what it was like working with Julie, after Julie became sick in Indianapolis. Rich felt withdrawal was the "gentlemanly" course in view of her illness.

The "funniest anecdote" in Rich's recollections, according to Ms. Cheshire, related to an editorial conference in which someone suggested an article on Chicago's Mayor Daley.

Julie Nixon Eisenhower came "close to losing her cool," Rich declares.

"Do you think that's such a good idea?" she asked. "I mean, he's such a crook."

The story was dropped on her demurrer.

Who's for Crow?

France's "blind faith" in the SST — the long-range Concorde and short-range Mercury—has been scored by *Le Monde*, which points to "lack of consumer enthusiasm for French aircraft" and warns that France may be putting into service an aircraft with no takers other than itself and some marginally important commercial clients like China and Iran.

Curiously, *Le Monde*'s objections have less to do with environmental concerns and energy worries than the fact that modification and bug-elimination costs will prove too much for France without well-to-do carriers like Lufthansa and Japan Air Lines buying up SSTs.

Back in the U.S., meanwhile, opponents of the SST see the energy crisis (or is it now really only a problem?) confirming the rightness of their opposition. As George F. Mueden, Jr., wrote recently to the *New York Times:*

"Now is the time for all those who advocated the development of the SST to come forward and eat crow."

Broken Record

Muddled Waters

The Diocese of Raleigh is still hung up over religious garb. The latest silliness: banning "RSVP," a singing group of the Medical Mission Sisters Society, based in Philadelphia, from appearing at a workshop on worship scheduled for a Raleigh Baptist church.

Bishop Vincent S. Waters cited, in justification, his dress code policy of 1971, which requires all priests and nuns within the diocese to wear traditional religious garb.

The Medical Mission Sisters discarded their religious habits in 1968—with approval from Rome.

Odds and Ends

— Quote of the Week Award to U.S. District Court Judge J. Robert Elliott for remarks in releasing "harmless" Lieut. William Calley Jr. on bail: "The only difference which I can observe in the position of Lieut. Calley as compared to that of Capt. [Howard] Levy, [anti-war Army doctor], is that Captain Levy was convicted for refusal to perform a military duty, whereas Lieut. Calley's conviction arose from his willing service in the armed forces."

—*The Economist* of London on the new U.S. military budget and Defense Secretary Schlesinger's plan to re-target American ICBMs: "If SALT-2 fails, 1974 will have introduced the idea of a flexible nuclear response and could be the beginning of an extremely expensive round in the arms race."

— A note from the Feb. 20 *Irish Times:* "It was either coincidence or superb timing, but within 24 hours of the Rev. Daniel Berrigan's arrival in Dublin, the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland had left for Cork to lecture law students last night on the 'Dissident American'." JOHN DEEDY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Exorcising Nixon

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: In News & Views in the February 8 issue John Deedy quotes the voter who wrote to Congressman Robert F. Drinan, S.J.: "If you can't impeach him, exorcise him."

Congressman Drinan, formerly dean of Boston College Law School, is a constitutional scholar and knows the Supreme Court would never stand for this. If Mr. Nixon is to be exorcised, it will have to be done by a nonsectarian clergyman. LEO PFEFFER

Catholic Homosexuals

Butler, N.J.

To the Editors: Gregory Baum in his February 15 article summarizes the new ethics well: "The traditional position on homosexuality is only too well known. Homosexuality has always been rejected as an unnatural vice. . . . In recent years, however, the argument from nature has become somewhat problematic in Catholic theology. The reason for this is not the influence of existentialism or what is sometimes called situation ethics—this represents too individualistic an emphasis to fit into the Catholic tradition—but, rather, the realization, derived from the analysis of culture and society, that what is called human nature has a history and is, in part at least, created by people, their interaction and their symbolic language. Human nature is not simply a given."

If, as Baum says, "homosexuality has always been rejected as an unnatural vice" the nature to which it is unnatural must be human nature. This human nature is in some respects unchanging if it *always* accepts or rejects the same things.

What is unchanging in it? Rationality, obviously. The law of reason. The law of reason is not abrogated by the Baums among us whose interaction and symbolic language run counter to it.

(Continued on page 70)

NEWS & VIEWS: 50 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 51
EDITORIALS: 51
WASHINGTON REPORT: Defusing the Presidency: *Sisyphus* 52
THE NOT SO OPEN CHURCH: *Michael Novak* 55
OIL INDIGESTION: *James A. Goodman* 56
MORAL CONSISTENCY AND THE ABORTION ISSUE: *Robert Edelstein, Edward S. Herman and Mary W. Herman* 59
VERSE: *Alan Altany* 54; *Marilyn Thomas* 58
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 61
THE PRESIDENT ON TELEVISION: *Michael Murray* 62
CHESTERTON AND THE TRUTH OF '74: *Dennis O'Brien* 64
BOOKS: *John Ratte, David Denby, Bernard Bergonzi* 66
ILLUSTRATIONS: *Front cover:* Virginia Weekly/LNS; *page 56: Wiaz/Le* Nouvel Observateur/LNS

JAMES O'GARA: *Editor* JOHN DEEDY: *Managing Editor*
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH: *Associate Editor* ANNE ROBERTSON: *Editorial Assistant*
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.: *Movies* JOHN FANDEL: *Poetry*
BRIAN WICKER: *Great Britain* ALAIN WOODROW: *Paris*
HENRY TEN KORTENAAR: *Rome* JOHN COONEY: *Dublin*
EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Publisher* JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1974 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada: $14 a year. Foreign $16. Single copies 50c

THE WILL TO PERSEVERE

The Watergate story is rushing towards its fateful climax, and it would be the rare person indeed who did not view the terminal events with twinges of emotion—the indictments raining down from the courts; the Congressional committees pressing towards reluctant conclusions; the President in almost constant revision of his alibis. A President and an Administration are coming apart before our very eyes, an unhappy spectacle made grim by the nervous, sweating unsureness of Richard Nixon whenever he is confronted in a public forum with the hard questions of why and wherefore.

The unraveling of any individual is a discomforting sight, and it is difficult not to feel a certain compassion for Mr. Nixon, victim though he undoubtedly is of his own abuses of Presidential prerogatives. At the same time, with the welfare of country inextricably bound up with the functioning of the Presidency, it is impossible not to be apprehensive about the strain that the investigation and possible impeachment of the President work upon the nation. The strain is so real that at times the impulse might be to wonder whether it would not be better to suffer three more years of Nixon as the lesser of national griefs. But, of course, that would be the easy thing to do. We are in debt to the governing board of the National Council of Churches for reminding us that "a nation is only as strong as the moral will it can muster to face its internal problems and resolve them through the orderly processes provided by its far-sighted founders."

The Council of Churches' observation comes in a statement supporting the impeachment of Richard Nixon—for justice's sake, but also in order to "restore confidence" in the office of the Presidency. This is a point well made, for to draw back now from the consequences dictated by the Watergate evidence will only be to breed cynicism for law and the system, and to reinforce, perhaps disastrously, the most fallacious of the Nixon defense arguments—that which makes the President the virtual embodiment of the American state, and which thus equates the fate of Richard Nixon with the fate of the office of the Presidency. It would be ironic in the extreme if, after all the warnings about the Presidency's having grown wildly out of proportion to what the Constitution intended, that distortion were to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impose itself on a crisis involving abuse of the office. In a word, the country will have reached a sorry point if, as Ralph Nader has suggested, it actually feels "that if you throw out a corrupt guy, you tarnish the office, when it should be the other way around."

The absence of strong precedents and clear lessons from history inevitably renders some people irresolute about impeaching Richard Nixon. The country has been through a Presidential impeachment only once before, and that instance provides few historical parallels for today. On the other hand, the nation has been through several Presidential assassinations, and survived. An impeachment would not be nearly so traumatic as any of those tragedies.

When everything has been said, the big question is not whether the country wants a Presidential impeachment, but whether it can afford, in the light of all that is known and suspected about President Nixon, not to have one. To turn back now, for whatever reasons, from the demands of justice and the law will be to ennoble fraud and deception, and heap yet another disservice on the Nixon disservice to country.

WASHINGTON REPORT

DEFUSING THE PRESIDENCY

There was a time when a President walked from the White House to the local newsstand at 11th and Pennsylvania Avenue to buy a local newspaper and, perhaps, a cigar. Today, should a President decide to do this, the streets would be cleared of motor vehicles and pedestrians pressed against the buildings by platoons of cops and Secret Service men (and, when the President arrived at the intersection in March, 1974, he'd find the newsstand dealing mostly in pornographic books and magazines).

There is this passage inserted in The Congressional Directory for 1825: "The President keeps morning appointments, but following that, anyone barbered and with a pleasant manner may call upon him. No appointment is necessary."

Nowadays, President Nixon speaks mostly to his Secretary of State, and Henry Kissinger, in turn, speaks mostly to Mohammed—or to airline stewardesses. There is reason to believe that during the Kennedy Administration, one chief aide on one occasion put on his suitcoat before answering a telephone call from the President on the intercom at the White House.

Yes, the monarchial nature of the Presidency is clearly apparent—and, perhaps, firmly established. And the trend has been welcomed and cultivated by both Democratic and Republican Presidents.

One shudders at the possibility that in contemporary times, Abraham Lincoln, burdened with the retinue of Presidential choreographers, including counselors and speech-writers, might never have found his own way to the Washington depot, boarded a train for Gettysburg and given his Address there. ("Shouldn't go, Mr. President, too many bad memories associated with the place . . . you may lose abolitionist Massachusetts, Mr. President . . . Evans & Novak won't like it, Mr. President . . . bad press vibes, Mr. President . . .").

Those who seek to replace Mr. Nixon demonstrate publicly little apprehension about the elevation of the Presidency. They do disagree about decisions made by the incumbent, but there comes from them little intimation that the Watergate affair has its roots in the growth of Presidential power and the panoply of the Office. Senators Jackson and Mondale, two prominent aspirants for their party's Presidential nomination, each basically states he can do better than Nixon. But the hazards of a reckless Presidency are not prime topics on their respective agendas. Criticism within the Senate, for example, is usually left to a few such as Senators Church and Fulbright—each of whom suffered considerable personal abuse from President Johnson because they objected to his bellicose intrusions upon Congressional authority and his taste for reinforcing the Caesarism in the Presidency. It is not that either Church or Fulbright has been without desire to be President—and each has a greater intellectual capacity for the position than recent incumbents—but simply the two men refuse to jettison their intellectual critical faculties in return for being able to occupy "the highest Office in the Land." The most recent memorable remark of a Presidential candidate that indicated an awareness between form and content of the Presidency was that of Eugene McCarthy in 1968. He promised that, once elected, the fence that surrounds the White House grounds would be removed as a symbolic effort toward achieving a reduced Presidency. His proposal, as others of his, was regarded as quixotic. Anyway, such a proposal has not been heard since.

For those living outside Washington, it is difficult to comprehend the inaccessibility and public artificiality of Presidents—their carefully structured public appearance, their speeches drafted and redrafted unto the sixth or seventh degree, their voice-teachers, make-up men/women and television coaches.

Although, perhaps, Americans at-large are getting a glimpse of it. This may be a reason why Harry Truman is coming into vogue, aided by a printed collection of taped interviews with him carried out in the early 1960s by Merle Miller *(Plain Speaking)*. Truman, policy faults

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and all, may have been the last President that Americans have been permitted to see as his authentic self. "Mr. Truman was perhaps the most guileless man ever to reach high office," Dean Acheson, his Secretary of State, once said.

It is not that national politics is without "genuine articles." There are many walking around Washington. One is Senator Mansfield of Montana, the Democratic Majority Leader. Mansfield probably could not be elected President as he now performs in his terse, plain-spun fashion. This, of course, is a tribute to Mansfield.

The scandalous Nixon Presidency may, by its own abominations, compel Americans to insist that the Presidency be deflated. Perhaps. But there's no evidence of this by putative candidates of either major political party. They still look upon the Presidency, as did Theodor Roosevelt, as that "bully pulpit" from which to lecture and to lead.

Realistically, modern events do favor a dominant Presidency. The concept of a "strong" Presidency is no longer just a literary one. In this century, by statute a President is now obliged to act in certain situations, wherein earlier Presidents had a choice. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act now makes it mandatory for a President to intervene in certain major labor-management disputes; the 1946 Employment Act establishes certain obligations for a President in respect to guiding the economy; a variety of statutes, enacted within the last 30 years, compels a President to act in a variety of foreign-affairs-related matters—military applications of atomic energy being one. Consequently, Richard Neustadt has pointed out: "A President may retain liberty, in Woodrow Wilson's phrase 'to be as big a man as he can.' But nowadays he cannot be as small as he might like."

Marshall McLuhan is no longer a fashionable prophet of what's ahead. But in one of his writings he provocatively noted: "As the speed of information increases, the tendency is for politics to move away from representation and delegation of constituents toward immediate involvements of the entire community in the central acts of decision." The observation is debatable but it's as good a bridge as any to the role of the press in inflating the Presidency and distorting the behavior of its occupants.

"The press constantly tempts a President to become a ham rather than a leader," Douglass Cater, a former aide to President Johnson, said recently at Johns Hopkins University. The Presidential press conference he described as a "professional wrestling match where the contestants grunt and groan and the public is not edified."

Whatever the validity of applying to the Presidency the adage that "new occasions teach new duties," the Office has become an unmanageable monster, Watergate aside.

It is unreasoning nostalgia to work toward returning the Presidency to a position in keeping with the literary theory of the Constitution—as evidenced in the pat phrase, checks-and-balances. Newton's laws for physical objects are not transferable in political terms. The President should not be a messenger-boy for Congressional liege-lords.

Some do suggest, as does Prof. Lewis Dexter, that a Constitutional Convention be summoned to reshape federal institutions by which an apparatus of "collective responsibility" could be established—perhaps, along the lines of the Canadian parliamentary system.

Other thoughtful commentators disagree. They, with Dexter, agree the Presidency should be defused. But their argument runs that essentially the federal system is a Presidential system. They argue that it is neither desirable nor possible to reshuffle the major branches of the federal government into new patterns. Better to institute ways of improving the Presidency as an instrument of government.

The Congress needs an infusion of strength, but there exists an historic unpopularity of Congress. Indeed, there is an argument that the federal system is, in its workings, actually a two-branch, not a three-branch system. The Congress is a collection of delegates from around the country who meet annually to exchange favors and agree to minimal national goals. This behavior is one that should be altered. The Congress is exhibiting itself as a badly tarnished pageant. Its Constitutionally-assigned responsibilities in foreign policy and public spending are almost beyond its grasp to recover.

The leadership of the Congress needs to be improved.

A synchronized budget system within the Congress needs to be established. Such an effort is now underway, but the hazard is that those who guard the doors of the new system will be the ones traditionally hostile to the unaffluent sectors of American society.

Congress also should assume an institutional role as ombudsman and intervenor on behalf of those bruised and mauled by the Executive Branch. Individual members of the Congress attempt to act in such a capacity, but they are unable, however diligent, to deal with the larger consequences of the problems of individual constituent complaints.

Congress has not been one to seek intellectual nourishment. Haphazardly, it is attempting to rectify this inadequacy, but not nearly promptly enough. The Congress may need an outside agency, a sort of Congressional Brookings Institution to feed it, willingly or not, with facts and policy choices about problems susceptible of legislation.

The Congress has made some small beginnings. One has been enactment of a so-called War Powers Bill last Summer. Even the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator Stennis of Mississippi, supported the measure which severely limited the power of a Pres-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ident to introduce American troops to hostilities or situations wherein hostilities are imminent. Moreover, such troops so introduced could not remain unless the Presidential action was approved by the Congress within 60 days after the President acted. There were some dissents. Senator Eagleton of Missouri argued vigorously that the measure, in effect, gave legal sanction to unilateral actions, which previously at least it could be argued were illegal. But seventy-two Senators believed that Congressional chestnuts, however charred and bruised, had better be pulled from the White House fireplace before it was too late.

The argument now being heard even within the Congress itself is that if it can make itself into an effective, alert and attractive Institution, then Americans would have the advantage of having two choices presented them for leadership—the President and the Congress.

A pointed warning for the Congress is one by de Tocqueville: "A danger to democracy is not the tyrant, but the good shepherd."

SISYPHUS

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

ALAN ALTANY

AS A MONK

"May the time come when men, having been awakened to a sense of the close bond linking all the movement of this world in the single, all-embracing work of the Incarnation, shall be unable to give themselves to any one of their tasks without illuminating it with the clear vision that their work—however elementary it may be—is received and put to good use by a Centre of the universe. When that comes to pass, there will be little to separate life in the cloister from the life of the world.

Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*

I am as a monk
walking monastery parapets
made of frozen March cornfields
walking in solitude
around the middle court
cloistered with unsprung budded trees,
my footsteps are empty clouds
silently passing the old barn.
At night I finger stars
as prayer-worn beads
raising my cold arms in supplication,
kneeling upon an eye-white altar
with earthly relics of stone,
the darkness carries an incense
the fragrance of dying winds.
Above my cowled spirit
an unbusheled
candle burns through the pale face
of a vigil moon, it is Nocturne
the last office of the day.

I am as a monk
alone in my blue walls room
as blackbirds call me to Terce
the time of morning chanting,
this I do at an old desk
by typing out melismatic poems
(humble and transient groping chants).

I'm part Cassandra, Quasimodo and monk
astride the basilica bell tower
throwing down old traps of flesh
and trembling praises in the bitter wind,
there's the goliard and the idiot about me
the hermit madman of the desert,
while the rest of the Order sleeps
I'm prostrate before the Holy Cross
warm blood dropping onto my heart.
The floor
tastes of salty years
shadows close the cracks
my nose is crushed to dust,
from the clerestory
come echoes of my struggled breath
from the apse an angel dream
with hands for wings
and a nimbus of thorns,

sleep suddenly comes
but can collapse be called sleep?
Birds are ringing for Matins
the baldachin's become a suspended web
turning light into rainbow roads,
it's time to rise, gather in my robe.
I'm as a monk
lost from his duties
squinting beneath the high sun
holding the Scriptures under one arm
firewood under the other
praying with hammer and a steel wedge
inside the monastery walls.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NOT SO OPEN CHURCH

MICHAEL NOVAK

One of the contributions of Daniel Callahan to Catholic life in recent years has been his recommendation that we meet the challenges of Philip Rieff, particularly in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic.* In *The Tyranny of Survival,* (Macmillan, $6.95), Callahan includes a long essay on Rieff; and Rieff has now published yet another meaty volume, *Fellow Teachers* (Harper & Row, $6.95).

Rieff is a man of spiritual and philosophical intensity, a man in whom the authority of genuine culture is lambent. There is no genuine culture, he notes, without interdiction; without negatives; without limits.

Callahan used to chide me, partly in the light of Rieff's work, for speaking of "the open church." For a long time I didn't get the full force of his criticism. By "open," I did not mean permissive, or flaccid, or non-committal—as in the phrase "open marriage." I had in mind the image of inquiring intellect, disciplined by concrete fact (in insight) and by evidence (in judgment)—"open" to the demands of inquiry, but "closed," too, by the exigencies of inquiry. I did not imagine that "anything goes."

But by "open," the contemporary temper, particularly in America, frequently seems to mean "without limits," "without negatives," "without demands." In the name of transcendence, barbarism is cultivated. "Liberation" seldom means the acceptance of responsibilities, duties, and limits; it tends to mean doing what one pleases when one pleases; it is sometimes a synonym for infantilism, a flight from social bonds and concrete duties.

The human spirit, ironically, gains such freedom as is accessible to it by the route of interdiction; by the acceptance of limits; by the disciplines of social and institutional involvement. There is no genuine learning, for example, without the humble submission of intelligence to the demands and discipline of plodding inquiry, in community with others who do not allow one to do simply as one pleases.

The recent debate in these pages (March 8) between Michael True and Gordon C. Zahn invokes these reflections. True argues for "a Catholic peace movement that is more 'catholic' than the Church." Among younger Catholics, he writes, "the traditional definitions of what is 'good' Catholic practice have simply disappeared." And he mockingly dares "Bishop Zahn" to insist upon the "excommunication of undesirable elements."

Many young Catholics, True notes, have "no qualms about calling themselves Catholic, as one might call himself American, or a Minneapolitan, or an Atlantan . . ." John Cogley after his conversion raised a similar point to opposite effect; he did not regard being a Catholic as a form of ethnic, regional, or tribal identity but as adherence in conscience to certain intellectual doctrines.

Cogley has part of the truth; so does True. To be a Catholic is to belong to a people, and to belong to a people places one under authority and discipline—under the intellectual and spiritual power of several historical traditions. That is a far deeper reality than being an Atlantan, or even being an American. (It is not, I think, as "doctrinal" as Cogley has described it, much as I admire his decision.)

Much that is admirable is done by the newer type of "young people." But we have every reason to believe that a too-easy attempt to be universal, to be a Catholic beyond concrete limits, without having internalized the authority of long, complex, and rich traditions, will end in sloganeering. Michael True's search for "larger constituencies" will one day pay a price, even if its achievements in other respects are both necessary and attractive.

For in America "openness" can be an enemy of the spirit. The pursuit of spontaneity, limitlessness, and even virtue is often damaging.

We see in many good persons a raging hunger for "commitment," commitment to some good and noble cause; sadly, such a hunger turns out almost always to be a fraudulent expression of the life of the spirit. The spirit is deeper than causes or commitments. The innocent itch in the American heart to be "humanistic," "good," and "transcendent" is neither as Christian nor as humane as it appears. It is often destructive, barbaric, out of touch with the terror of human life.

For this reason, the witness of Cogley is important: Better to leave the Church than to be so "open-minded" that there are no interdictions, only the historical accident of birth into a Catholic family.

Thus, today, we are almost back to where we were in the 1930s, when Sheed & Ward and *The Review of Politics* tried so desperately to nourish "a Catholic culture." It is true that there are many more Catholics in colleges, in the professions, among writers, and in positions of political and cultural influence. But there is not yet a deep Catholic cultural life, a distinctive set of disciplines, methods, insights—and, yes, interdictions so deeply and exactly expressed that they affect the hearts of all who hear. The soil of our souls is unbearably thin. What can grow in it? Not, perhaps, even our children.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OIL INDIGESTION

JAMES A. GOODMAN

For years, the magic words 'national security' shielded the oil companies

"We have no windfall profits."
—J. K. Jamieson, Chairman of Exxon
News conference
January 23, 1974

"Are oil profits big?
Right.
Big enough?
Wrong."
"So says the Chase Manhattan Bank."
—Excerpt from a Mobil ad
The New York Times
January 25, 1974

"There is no digit on earth less
pertinent to the solution
of the energy crisis than
'the pointing finger.'
"If there is blame, there is
certainly enough to go around."
—Excerpt from Gulf Oil ad
The Wall Street Journal
February 13, 1974

"How in all conscience
can anyone call these
excess profits?"
—Excerpt from a Shell ad
The Denver Post
January 18, 1974

Perhaps the best time to digest these statements and the flood of others that have filled the newspapers in recent weeks is over the kitchen table while you are trying to understand a 44.7 percent rise in last year's heating bill or while you sit in your car waiting for gas and nervously watching the indicator merge with "empty." And if the line is long enough, contemplate the study by the Chase Manhattan Bank which tells us that we are supposed to dish out $1 trillion between now and 1985 to lubricate the oil companies so they won't get unhappy. Remember this figure while you stomach how oil companies suffered through the Middle East conflict with fourth quarter earnings up 61 percent from the previous year's final quarter. Then, try to reconcile these differences by reading that omnipresent Shell ad that reassures the consumer that "we have basically the same ends in mind; that is, providing for the needs of the American consumer as well and fully as possible." Although the cost of all these ads will certainly jack up next year's expense accounts, large advertising costs are nothing new for oil companies. A recent Government Accounting Office study shows how oil companies' advertising budgets often rival funds allocated for research. And according to January's *Consumer Reports,* the six leading gasoline marketers spent "more than $38 million in 1972 in promotional advertising" at a time when oil companies should have been devoting their resources to the refining of home heating oil to head off last winter's shortage. (1972 was also the year that oil companies kicked more than $5 million into the Nixon reelection coffers.)

Amidst all the conflicting information that has hit the newspapers over the last few months, several important revelations should stick in our minds. First off, it's no longer a trade secret that the world is not short of crude oil—at least not yet—but rather there is a shortage of fuel oil and gasoline refined from the crude substance. Moreover, despite record fourth quarter earnings by Big Oil (Exxon, 67 percent; Mobil, 68 percent; Texaco, 70 percent; Gulf, 153 percent;), oil companies have not been breaking their backs to produce more oil for pub-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lic consumption. The bulk of last year's 46 percent increase in profits (from only a 6 percent growth in sales) by the seven largest oil companies came from overseas earnings. For the first eight months of last year, less crude oil was pumped from fewer new wells in this country than during the same period of 1972.

Even more significant, however, has been the failure of the vertically integrated energy trusts to build domestic refinery space to handle increased demand. The construction of new U.S. refineries, according to Bureau of Mines statistics, declined both in 1972 and 1973. Furthermore, a study by the *New York Times* (December 9, 1973) reveals that oil products have been hesitant to expand refining capacity for some time. Between 1967 and 1972, the increment of daily demand outstripped added refinery output by 1.1 million barrels. In fact, the latest round of the Church Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearings reports that total investment by American companies in crude oil and natural gas actually decreased between the years 1968 and 1971 from $4,675,000,000 to $3,185,000,000.

The Church hearings have also shed a ray of light on the intricate relationship between Big Oil and postwar diplomacy. For years, the magic words "national security" shielded the oil companies from public scrutiny. "National security" provided the rationale for the creation of the oil import quota of 1959. In theory, the import quota would stop cheap foreign oil from flooding domestic markets which in turn would stimulate the development of indigenous oil-producing facilities and prevent a situation of dependency on foreign oil. Somehow forgotten was the fact that the development of domestic and foreign markets more often than not is dictated by the same companies immune from any mechanism of supply and demand. As early as 1970, a Cabinet-level task force recommended to the President that import quotas be replaced by a more flexible tariff system. Pressured by the oil lobby, Nixon resisted the recommendation. Only when the oil companies seemed convinced that foreign oil would not endanger the domestic price of petroleum were the nationally secured oil import quotas eventually modified.

But even more significant was the privileged status "national security" granted Big Oil in its foreign operations. Around the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) and the Iranium Consortium, the State Department hoped to ward off Soviet penetration into Arabian petroleum fields. Consequently, a 1950 Treasury Department decree enabled American-owned oil companies to credit taxes paid to foreign governments dollar-for-dollar against taxes paid on domestic oil production. While the foreign investments of U.S.-based oil multinationals brought back bountiful returns, their bills to the Treasury shrank in size. In 1973, for example, the top five American oil companies pulled in $4.5 billion from foreign investments but paid only minimal taxes to the Treasury.

Not until the emergence of Libyan Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi in December, 1969, did the position of American oil producers come under serious attack. By the autumn of 1970, Qaddafi forced increased taxes and royalties upon American-owned Occidental Petroleum. Testimony before the Church committee tells how Exxon ignored Occidental, a company much smaller than Exxon, when representatives from Occidental sought assistance to resist Qaddafi. As a result, Qaddafi was able to establish the precedent of isolating one company from the others and upping taxes and royalties with the threat of expropriation always hanging over an oil company's head. The formation of the London Policy Group in late 1970 and the Justice Department's January 15, 1971 business review letter (in effect, an antitrust waiver) represented a belated attempt by Western oil companies to counter the growing demands by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and an abdication of regulatory responsibility by the Justice Department. Moreover, the State Department extended "national security" status to private business by classifying these negotiations.

The hypocrisy of the "national security" blanket that still shrouds much of the oil companies' operations became most blatant during the latest outbreak of fighting in the Middle East—a time when the immediate self-interest of Big Oil seemed in jeopardy. Senator Henry Jackson later confirmed a December 1, 1973 article published in *Business Week* which describes a November 4 decree by Saudi Arabian King Faisal to the four American members of Aramco (Exxon, Standard Oil of California, Mobil, and Texaco). King Faisal ordered these companies "to cut off supply of products derived from Saudi oil to U.S. forces stationed around the world."

Although the Arab embargo theoretically prevents Middle East oil from entering the United States, oil companies can and do take their business elsewhere. Moreover, any increased costs tacked on to foreign oil that reaches this country as well as any added expenditure for domestic production is merely passed on to the consumer. Seventy percent of all domestic crude oil is now classified as "old oil" (the amount below 1972 production figures.) In the past year, the price of this government-regulated oil has increased from $3.50 a barrel to the current price of $5.25—with the latest $1 increase granted on December 19. Unregulated "new oil" has hovered around $10 a barrel, and if a ceiling is imposed on this oil, the Federal Energy Office seems bent on holding the price above the $7 mark.

There are 64 agencies distributed among nine execu-

JAMES A. GOODMAN *is a free-lance journalist whose work has appeared in* Newsday, *the* Milwaukee Journal *and other publications.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive branch departments, 15 independent agencies and the Executive Office of the President involved in some aspect of the energy crisis. In addition, 28 Congressional committees have delved one way or another into the issue.

Yet, thus far, little more than a stronger executive and added bureaucracy seem to be filtering out of this mess. Whatever potency an emergency energy bill might have hinges on the ability to tackle the energy trusts. The likelihood of an "interested person clause" which would allow individuals to challenge energy prices before a federal Renegotiation Board has been stymied by stiff Presidential and Congressional resistance as has the bite of any tax reform. Disclosure proposals have been watered down, and the Nixon's misnomered "windfall profits tax" would be nullified by its "plowback" rider. While Big Oil has led a successful counterattack against its critics, the American Petroleum Institute—the chief oil lobby—has only replied to Representative Les Aspin's query why heating oil prices continue to rise if heating fuel stocks are up 28.5 percent compared to a mere 5.4 percent increase in its demand by telling us how warm is the winter and cooperative the consumer. Barring a mass consumer revolt, the oil companies should emerge from legislative scrutiny with little more than a slap on the wrist.

The axiom that Nixon and the oil majors share the same axis is substantiated by a reading of Nixon's energy policy statements. Last spring, when a shift in refining priorities by the oil companies turned the winter's fuel shortage into a spring gas shortfall, the President's April 18 message called to our attention the "energy challenge" we all face and hoped we would rally around the Nixon flag. Beyond an occasional swipe at environmentalists, a call for the deregulation of natural gas, and end of the 14-year oil import quota (three years after his task force's recommendation), the message was long in wind but short in content. Absent was any mention of skyrocketing prices, growing monopolization of all energy sources and a sense of urgency needed to confront the upcoming crisis.

On November 8, 1973, the President—plagued by the waves of Watergate and faced with an embroiled Middle East—told Congress an "energy crisis" beset the country:

> Unfortunately, the energy crisis that once seemed a distant threat to many people is now closing upon us quickly. We had expected moderate shortages of energy this winter, but four weeks ago, when war broke out in the Middle East, most of our traditional suppliers in that area cut off their shipments of oil to the United States. Their action has now sharply changed our expectations for coming months.

Nevertheless, several weeks later, the President claimed to have seen "this thing coming" and pointed the finger of blame at the inactivity of Congress. By January, energy czar William Simon spoke of the widespread misconception that the "public is victimized" and complained of the "blame syndrome" sweeping the country.

However, the year's tally of the effects of the energy crisis only added to public cynicism. December's consumer prices were 8.8 percent above the previous December—the highest rate of increase since 1947. Furthermore, unemployment turned sharply upward. Labor Department statistics claim that an estimated 100,000 layoffs occurred in the second week of December from the energy crunch and recent reports tell of a current total of 241,000 job cutbacks resulting from the crisis. Monthly unemployment rose from 4.8 percent in December to 5.2 percent in January. But despite these figures, the President, in a January 29 letter to Senator Hugh Scott, maintains that "Unemployment cannot be effectively dealt with by a system that seeks to find a *tenuous* (my italics) connection with the energy crisis. . . ."

For too long a time, government policies have sounded a note not unlike those oil ads. If this marriage between Big Government and Big Oil continues, "Project Independence" will produce a country dependent on energy monopolies by 1980. What is needed is energy responsive to the consumer instead of the trusts.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

MARILYN THOMAS

HOW SHALL I ASCEND FROM THE DEEP

How shall I ascend from the deep silver
Death of my father? The dark
Driving chimes that will announce

His frail passing into earth?
And then the dust
That inevitably

Will arise
Into my soul; the everlasting
Memory of him

That will stir and stiffen
Me into memory
Of heroes, and sympathy

For troubled
Heroes who failed
To prosper at an early

Age, but who
Passed onto consciousness the vivid
Memory of bells.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MORAL CONSISTENCY AND THE ABORTION ISSUE

ROBERT EDELSTEIN, EDWARD S. HERMAN and MARY W. HERMAN

Protecting human life before and after birth

As Brian Wicker indicated in his "Angola Comes to Britain" [Aug. 10], there seems to be a basic contradiction in the position many people take on abortion and on the "right to life" in other contexts. Specifically, he points out the inconsistency between "the rejection of abortion, on the grounds of protecting innocent human life," and the failure to reject "indiscriminate violence or the threat of it in 'defense' policy." Further, anti-abortion campaigners in Great Britain, who he believes "tend to be middle-class, middle-of-the-road, respectable, 'law-and-order' oriented people," seldom "see the connections between what they are doing and what the long-haired, disheveled, free-wheeling 'peace' people are up to." A similar lack of communication and understanding is found in the reverse direction as well, but most peace activists have not rested their case on the general principle of the "right to life."

John Cardinal Krol, however, to take a recent and typical illustration, states that as regards abortion the matter is simply "that human life—at every stage of its existence—is sacred and inviolable" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 22, 1974). Yet the Cardinal, despite a number of general statements in recent years denouncing inflated arms budgets and war as detrimental to the interests of the world's poor, has manifested a steadfast moral solidarity with Richard Nixon—participating in prayer meetings at the White House, giving the invocation at the Republican Convention of 1972, inviting the President to address the National Catholic Education Association, etc.—undeterred by the fact that Mr. Nixon has dropped more bombs than any man in history and has been quite open in his preference for arms expenditures over those with constructive social content. And while the Cardinal did speak out against the bombing of Hanoi in 1972, he had been conspicuously silent on the savageries and violations of the sacredness of human life in Indochina for the previous seven years. The parochial school children of Philadelphia were never bussed during school hours to a demonstration against the Vietnam war, or inflation of the arms budget, or cutbacks in social services, as they were recently to protest liberal abortion laws.

ROBERT EDELSTEIN *and* EDWARD S. HERMAN *teach in the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.* MARY W. HERMAN *is a member of the staff of Thomas Jefferson University.*

Casual familiarity with the American scene suggests that Cardinal Krol is far from exceptional, and that disproportionate numbers of Catholics, low-income working-class people, and middle-aged or older members of the population—the "hard hat" and "silent majority" constituencies—have taken essentially "right to death" positions on war, welfare and "law and order," while simultaneously opposing abortion and liberalization of abortion laws on the basis of a "right to life" principle. The precise extent of overlap and inconsistency between the anti-abortion and pro-war (etc.) positions has rarely been examined or explored in any detail.

An opportunity to test consistency in attitudes toward abortion and the "right to life" in other contexts—and the hypothesiss that these positions tend to reflect traditional values and attitudes rather than any belief in the sanctity of human life *per se*—was presented by legislation acted upon in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in the 1971-1972 session. An extremely restrictive anti-abortion bill (H.B. 800) was introduced by Representative Martin Mullen (Republican and Catholic), passed by the House, reconsidered, vetoed by Democratic Governor Shapp, and then passed over his veto. The Senate, however, failed to override the Governor's veto, so that this bill did not become law. It also would have had to be changed in any case as a result of the Supreme Court decision of January 1973, according to which most legal restrictions on abortions up to the sixth month of pregnancy would be unconstitutional.

In the same session of the legislature a bill was introduced that would have reinstituted capital punishment in the state of Pennsylvania (H.B. 884). There was also a motion introduced by Representative Gerald Kaufman that would have given the House an opportunity to express its views on the Vietnam war—a motion that was recognized as itself representing a negative attitude toward the Vietnam conflict. In addition, a deficiency appropriation needed to continue payments to welfare recipients and a prison reform bill which would have allowed the parole board to exercise greater discretion over prison time to be served (H.B. 680, the "Good Time" prison reform bill), were considered by the legislature. The first two votes provide measures of legislators' reactions to the direct termination of post-fetal human life. The last two bills may be regarded as crude indicators of concern with human welfare, despite the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fact that the prison reform bill was considered by some to be a flawed piece of legislation on its own liberal premises.

These provided the material for analyzing together the votes by members of the Pennsylvania House on the abortion bills and on the set of bills and motion that were related to the preservation and enhancement of life after birth. Data was collected on the votes of each member of the House on the two versions of the anti-abortion bill (plus the vote for overriding Shapp's veto) and on the four pieces of legislation pertaining to post-fetal life and welfare. Information was also gathered on the political party, religion, age, and rural or urban constituency of each legislator. These data were then analyzed to test the statistical significance of the relevant relationships.*

Analysis of this information shows, not surprisingly, that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between Catholicism among Pennsylvania legislators** and voting for an anti-abortion position, with an overwhelming 38 of 39 Catholic legislators (97 percent) voting for the original anti-abortion bill. The analysis also shows that there was a significant "anti-life" relationship between Catholic affiliation and support for the reinstitution of capital punishment and a pro-Vietnam war stance. The Catholic legislators who voted for the anti-abortion bill, voted 34 to 4 (90 percent) for the reinstitution of capital punishment and 30 to 8 (80 percent) against the anti-war Kaufman motion on Vietnam. Martin Mullen, author of the anti-abortion bill, and one who, like Cardinal Krol, defends it on the grounds of the sanctity of all human life, voted for the return of capital punishment in Pennsylvania and in favor of the Vietnam war (i.e., against the Kaufman motion).

There is also a statistically significant relationship between the Catholic affiliation of Pennsylvania legislators and opposition to the Good Time bill, which, as noted, is of arguable value but is, on balance, regarded by Pennsylvania progressives as a positive piece of prison reform legislation. The anti-abortion bill Catholics voted 21 to 17 (55 percent) against the Good Time bill. Catholicism is positively related to support of the welfare deficiency bill, but the relationship is too weak to be statistically significant, although the anti-abortion bill Catholic legislators voted for it by 33 to 5.

In determining "significant relationship" the "Catholicism effect" has been separated from the "party effect" by our statistical procedures, a very important necessity since party affiliation is probably the main determinant of most votes in the Pennsylvania legislature. A majority of Pennsylvania House Catholics are Democrats. The Democratic party variable showed no significant relationships in the voting on two of the three abortion votes, although for the third the party vote itself was anti-abortion. But on the capital punishment and Vietnam war issues the Democratic party effect was statistically significant and "pro-life," in contrast

with the Catholicism effect; and the Democratic party variable was significant and progressive on prison reform (in contrast with the Catholicism vote) and significantly in favor of the welfare deficiency bill (whereas the Catholic variable was positive but not statistically significant).

It should be noted that support for the restrictive original anti-abortion bill was correlated with "anti-life" positions on the part of *non*-Catholic legislators as well as Catholics. For example, of the 116 non-Catholic legislators' votes recorded in favor of the anti-abortion bill, 97 (or 84 percent) voted for the reinstitution of capital punishment and 88 (76 percent) voted against the anti-war Vietnam motion. Of the 39 legislators voting against the original abortion bill only 20 (51 percent) voted for a reinstatement of capital punishment and 21 (55 percent) against the Kaufman motion. This supports the hypothesis that attitudes and votes on abortion are connected with underlying traditional attitudes that have little connection with any general pro-life sentiments.

To summarize and conclude, then, there would seem to be a serious inconsistency in the attitudes of many anti-abortion legislators, probably similar to that of the anti-abortion constituency at large, between the "right to life" before and after birth. This might conceivably be explained and justified on the grounds of the utter innocence and defenselessness of pre-birth humanity, in contrast with the greater complexity of the situation in post-birth life. But this distinction automatically comprises "right to life" as a general and sacred principle applicable to human beings. What is more, there have

---

* The standard regression analysis employed is too complicated and cumbersome to describe in this article, but a short technical summary of the methods and main resultant equations has been prepared by the authors. Any interested reader may obtain it by writing to Dr. Robert Edelstein, W-125 Dietrich Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Phila. Pa. 19174.

** This is based on religious affiliations listed in the *Pennsylvania Manual*, 1973. This listing may well be incomplete, so that some, but probably not many, with a Catholic affiliation show up in our data as non-Catholic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been large scale massacres in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945), Indonesia (1965-1966), Indochina (1965-1973) and Burundi (1972-1973), to name only a few, where very large numbers of babes in arms and small children were slaughtered, which elicited no discernible response from the anti-abortion forces despite the closeness of many of the victims to fetal innocence.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that for a substantial number of anti-abortion proponents the dichotomy between the concern over pre-birth life and a too frequent better-than-average willingness to see it extinguished thereafter is incompatible with any real adherence to a general principle of "right to life." The motivating forces that can explain such a dichotomy seem to derive from a complex mélange of conservative traditional values and attitudes, including an element of nationalism, of religious belief, and of puritanical attitudes toward work, vice, sin and proper retribution. They may also be a reflection of the insecurities, fears and difficulties of people trying to adapt in a rapidly changing and confusing world.

BLACK COMEDY

THE SCREEN

Mel Brooks has a truly baroque sense of humor, as his new film, *Blazing Saddles*, demonstrates. Such an eccentric wealth of material comes out of his imagination that this film is usually working full tilt on three different levels at once: social satire, straight, old-fashioned slapstick comedy, and parody of various other Hollywood genres, most notably, of course, the Western. As a slapstick comedy it deals with the plight of a frontier town that has to defend itself from land-grabbing railroad men with the aid of an unwilling and unwelcome sheriff. As a social satire, it has this sheriff supplied by the corrupt state government turn out to be a black man, Black Bart (Cleavon Little). As a parody it begins with a spoof on "Ghost Riders in the Sky" sung by Frankie Lane, and includes a Madeline Kahn take-off of Marlene Dietrich's *Destry Rides Again* in which Miss Kahn warbles complainingly about how tired she is 'from the waist down." It is, as the saying goes, a sketch.

Unhappily, that's often all it is: a sketch. It's not enough to make up a whole movie. Despite generating some material that works on all three levels, Brooks doesn't always have what he needs to keep the film going. On the program notes distributed at the press screening, a correction inserted by hand suggested that the film had been cut from an original two hours plus to its present ninety-three minutes. But there are still dead spots where Brooks can't think of anything genuinely funny to do, so he has the school marm, or whoever, say a dirty word. Moreover, the multiple levels on which the film is attempting to work don't always enhance each other. At times, in fact, they cancel each other out, especially where Bart is concerned. This is because the social satire and the slapstick comedy make contrary demands on his role.

In Brooks' view the former requires that, as a black man, Bart see through the bigotries, hypocrisies and illusions of the whites. He must be capable of a knowing, almost indulgent reaction to them. For instance, when he first arrives in Rocky Ridge, the town where he's to be sheriff, the entire population draws on him. To escape Bart pulls out his own gun as if he too were getting the drop on himself. Having thus taken himself hostage, he edges himself through the crowd toward the refuge of the jail.

This is a funny bit too, until Bart makes it to safety and at once shrugs off these gullible yokels with an unconcerned air. Before the comedy has successfully run its course, such a gesture of bemusement, repeated at the conclusion of skit after skit, kills the laugh every time. Whatever the gesture might do for the social satire, it is a wet blanket on the slapstick. The *mise en scène* of slapstick is destroyed when the protagonist suddenly switches from being the hapless victim of society to being a wry, ironic observer of it—when he unexpectedly turns out to be not so much the butt of the joke as the practical joker himself.

It might seem that Brooks has just decided he must ultimately sacrifice the slapstick to the satire. But in truth I think it is a weakness in the social satire, not its strength, that interferes with the total effect of the film at these moments. The fact is that Brooks is letting us off easily, and by *us* I mean the audience for whom the film was made, the white middle-class audience with whom the film will have to make its nut. Out of consideration for our touchy sensibilities, Brooks shies away from any really acerbic visions of race relations. Bart takes whitey's abuse in stride as if the problem were for him to be tolerant of white society rather than vice versa. He can even manipulate the white man and avoid the consequences of his malice so handily, that malice need not be thought of as a legitimate problem anyway. *Blazing Saddles* is thus careful—too careful—not to offend us. Like *All in the Family*, Brooks' film makes our prejudices seem so apparent and inept that we might conclude they must be harmless as well. The trouble with *Blazing Saddles* is that it's a comedy not black enough.

In the end, however, it's the Hollywood parody that comes to the top and dominates both the social satire and the slapstick. The final free-for-all with the railroad gang takes place on a replica of Rocky Ridge's main

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

street which Bart persuades the townspeople to build. But as the camera zooms back from this scene, it reveals that the replica is on the back lot at the Warner Brothers studio. The fight now spills over onto a sound stage where filming of a musical is in progress, and it eventually ends up at Grauman's Chinese Theater. Brooks' zaniness, his instinct for incongruities, doesn't fail him here. These closing scenes all go in a dozen different directions at once. But somehow they are still not as funny as they ought to be considering all the energy they are expending.

Maybe Brooks himself has tried to go in too many different directions at once. He has not only tried to work on too many levels of consciousness at the same time, but has taken on too many jobs: actor, director, writer, producer, lyricist, etc. There are two separate roles in which Brooks appears as an actor. (One is the corrupt governor of the territory, and the other a Yiddish-speaking Indian chief.) And even when these characters are not on the screen, Brooks still seems to be there in the person of Bart. Bart's ambiguity, this too agile dexterity of his which allows him first to participate in a scene, then to stand aside and admire his handiwork, seems to reflect Brooks' own dilemma as director. Like Bart, Brooks has to juggle too many points of view for his own good. It's no wonder that he plays the governor as cross-eyed. Between working so hard behind the camera and working in front of it as well, Brooks himself must have been cross-eyed by that point.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE PRESIDENT ON TELEVISION

MICHAEL MURRAY

Public Relations and Presidential Campaigns
MELVYN H. BLOOM
Crowell, $10

Fear in the Air
HARRY S. ASHMORE
Norton, $6.95

Presidential Television
NEWTON W. MINOW,
JOHN BARTLOW MARTIN,
LEE M. MITCHELL
Basic Books, $8.95

We all remember from high school the athlete who had no gift for sports but who made the team anyway. His form was downright depressing—drab, awkward and flailing; his appearance robbed the whole game of class. Yet because of some obsessive desire, and after hours of dismal practice, he got to the point where his ball went doggedly in the basket or his bat chopped out mean-spirited singles through the infield.

So we might imagine Richard Nixon's football career at Whittier College. So too we might think of Mr. Nixon's present reputation as a master of media.

No President has been more conscious of the media. Statistics in *Presidential Television*, for example, indicate that he has popped up on prime time far more often than his predecessors, and at the same time he has organized an impressive governmental juggernaut to control everybody else's appearances. Yet despite all this hard work, he seems to have no real talent for this game, no natural sense of the easy rhythms of demagoguery by media, no feeling for the smooth swing of manipulation.

Mr. Nixon approaches the media as he does everything else, with wary hostility; these are barriers to be overcome rather than tools to use. Thus the Nixon team is always talking about getting *past* the media and reaching people directly, without distortions and interpretations. They seem to feel that the Checkers speech in the first Eisenhower campaign was a high point in this effort. Actually, it is probable that the electorate was so eager to absolve him of any wrongdoing—mainly in order to absolve Eisenhower for choosing him—that he could have said anything at all and gotten away with it. But the result must have been inspiring to the young candidate. In a single stroke he lifted himself beyond the tar of Herblock's brush. It became for him a model of political communication, evidence of some magical "common touch" which he has been trying to recapture ever since, with mounting panic and confusion. Eight years later came the abrupt reversal of this success when, in his view, a single half-hour on television with John Kennedy cost him the election.

Between that time and the present, Nixon has battled the media with increasingly fierce determination and little understanding of the basic problems. For a time, despite the trauma of the Great Debates, television was seen as the means to by-pass the print media, his ancient enemy. Frank Shakespeare, a TV executive who joined the election campaign of 1968, is quoted by Joe McGinniss in *The Selling of the President*: "Without television, Richard Nixon would not have a chance. Nixon . . . would not have a prayer of being elected because the press would not let him get through to the people. But

MICHAEL MURRAY *is a free-lance writer and theater director living in New York.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because he is so good on television he will get through despite the press. The press doesn't matter any more."

We may recall that the format chosen for this campaign was a series of carefully controlled question-and-answer sessions with a hand-picked audience, moderated by Bud Wilkinson. The crowd's reactions were rehearsed and enthusiastic; the questions were pleasantly uninformed. These programs were made and shown locally, to a particular state or region, to stress the candidate's desire to speak to people on a homey, one-to-one basis. (In this way too, the same questions and answers could be repeated, more or less, week after week in different regions, without boring anyone except the traveling reporters.)

These were, of course, commercials. They were entirely under the control of the product managers. This is what Frank Shakespeare meant by "television" which Nixon was "so good at." This must have been what Nixon himself had in mind as the most effective way to "get through" to people. After the election, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Ziegler and other advertising men were installed in Washington with the job of getting Nixon through, and they tried to package and release all Presidential messages and activities like so many commercials. Recently, of course, this system has broken down and the President finds it not so easy to be "good at" television when informed people are asking him real questions.

Basically, I think Nixon does not trust himself as a communicator. Like the untalented high school athlete, he watches the graceful performers around him and makes a conscientious effort to imitate their style. As he goes through the motions, he *feels* graceful, but he suddenly sees that it isn't coming off—there are giggles in the bleachers. Out of his shame comes the resolve to play the game in his own style and to beat it.

As the authors of *Presidential Television* point out, the increasing use of TV as a tool of the Chief Executive has the potential to undermine the checks and balances in our system. If Nixon were any better at it we might really be in trouble. The Presidential Address, just one of his media weapons, can not only be broadcast on all channels whenever the President pleases, but it also carries with it a tradition of respect and authority which has seemed, until recently, to guarantee the truth of what is said. Witness, for example, the maiden Presidential speech of anyone who formerly had been only a candidate or a Vice President: his words now resonate with importance and sober wisdom. Nixon's men understood this and they rushed to make use of it, but the President, with everything going for him, botched his opportunity, and the tradition itself may now be a thing of the past.

Nixon has a way of starting off a speech as he remembers other Presidents doing it—his rich baritone hushed and solemn, his gaze steady. Soon, however, confidence fails him, and he is throwing in smirks and smiles; the act rapidly disintegrates. On occasion he has been advised, dignity having collapsed, to jazz up these speeches with charts and films—a "presentation" in ad agency style. Speeches before a live audience of partisans seem to give him comfort, but in the privacy of the TV studio he falls back frequently on two devices: a) the short speech, in which he makes a few announcements and is gone before the giggles can begin; b) the astounding statement, which leaves everyone too stunned to be critical.

This all might be harmless enough. The rub is that his failures in this department have led to aggressive tactics elsewhere, and these may have a more serious impact on our institutions. The challenge is stated bluntly by Kevin Phillips, the former White House aide, as quoted in *Fear in the Air*: "The key to the . . . feud between the Nixon administration and the news media may lie in legal and economic history. Quite simply: Is the First Amendment to the United States Constitution obsolescent? . . . My own feeling is yes, the Amendment is obsolescent and therefore cannot cope with Big Media power. This invites—and even obliges —the government to move in. . . ."

We know that the government has in fact moved in against Big Media power on a number of fronts—some rhetorical, although threatening, others in the form of specific rulings and muscular urgings from the FCC, the FTC, the Office of Telecommunications Policy, the White House Office of Communications and the Justice Department —all with the intention of taking power away from the three major networks and the Public Broadcasting Service and distributing it in small quantities to the local stations. In this way, returning to Nixon's old theme, the President could talk directly to the folks, without the nuisance of an informed and centralized opposition.

Watergate and the publication of White House documents outlining the battle plan have been a wet blanket on this activity, but the rhetoric is still rolling. Patrick Buchanan turns up regularly on television to draw his picture of a vicious and distorting press, and recent reports have depicted the new director of the White House Office of Communications calling up TV commentators, while they are on the air, to demand retractions of what they have just said.

More fundamental, and a piece of odd bad luck, is that if Mr. Nixon stays in office until June he will have been able to name all seven members of the Federal Communications Commission. Since the appointments are for seven years, and since crucial decisions concerning new technologies will be made in the near future, the Nixon FCC will be another enduring memorial to his point of view. By law, of course, the commission is "independent," and must have three members not of the President's party, but no one should be surprised that the most recent Democratic appointee, James H. Quello, is a former broadcaster (to replace Nicholas Johnson, the consumer advocate) and a contributor to Mr. Nixon's last election campaign.

As in every aspect of Nixon's Presidential performance, the most serious damage is to the spirit behind the institutions and regulations. The fact that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the airwaves are a scarce resource and are in some sense the property of everyone, has led through the years to many dilemmas about the regulation of radio and television. We are left with admittedly uncomfortable situations: that if one point of view is expressed on the air, an opposing point of view must somehow also be accommodated; that power inevitably accrues to those who are in charge of the inevitable networks; that any licensing and regulation of radio and TV will sometimes seem in conflict with the First Amendment, and so on. Such situations can only be dealt with in an atmosphere of common sense and at least minimal goodwill, and without the pressure of intense partisanship. Thus the scare tactics of Clay Whitehead, outgoing head of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, suggesting that local situations must monitor the fairness of network news programs, for fear of losing their licenses, may be legalistically correct but would have the effect of hampering one of the main things that broadcasters, local and national, are in business for—the dissemination of news. Which was probably his intention.

It may be that by ignoring or flouting the traditional accommodations and loose arrangements between government and media, Mr. Nixon is at least doing us the service of prompting a new examination of the whole thing. There has been a recent flood of books, articles and panel discussions on the subject of government vs. media. The three books under consideration here are relatively new additions to the long list. These three neatly span the three major areas of concern: Mr. Bloom considers election campaigns, tracing the mushrooming influence of public relations men and methods from Eisenhower's first campaign to the present; Mr. Ashmore's book is the result of a conference sponsored by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at which spokesmen for all points of view discussed the problems of media regulation, with an emphasis on possible intimidation by government; Messrs. Minow, Martin and Mitchell offer the results of a study for the Twentieth Century Fund which deal primarily with the new Bully Pulpit—the extraordinary media access which is available to the executive branch for the promulgation of its programs and points of view, and the comparatively little access which is available to anyone else.

These volumes help to bring us up to date, and they make it clear that media management on the part of the government has become easier and easier, and that free speech in the context of modern technology is an elusive term. They do not dig very deep: Mr. Bloom spends too much time going over ground already covered by Theodore White, Joe McGinniss and others; Mr. Ashmore's chatty conference transcripts are lively reading but cannot pursue any single point in depth; the Twentieth Century Fund report is truly informative but, I suppose, necessarily ponderous.

Still, it is a symptom of the problem that one State of the Union address, with cameras discreetly focused on the cheering galleries, seems to outweigh ten replies by Mike Mansfield, twenty interpretations by Eric Sevareid, and hundreds of books such as these. It reminds us that, although the basic ineptness of this Administration has sometimes taken the urgency out of the problem, and although Mr. Nixon has operated often without flair or grace, he still knows that scoring is the important thing, and he keeps piling up the points.

BOOKS

CHESTERTON AND THE TRUTH OF '74

DENNIS O'BRIEN

G. K. Chesterton
DUDLEY BARKER
Stein and Day, $8.95

"Chesterton, Gilbert Keith." From the fragments left by this now forgotten writer it is difficult to understand the cause even of such publicity as he obtained in his own day; nevertheless there is reason to believe he was not without certain fugitive mental gifts. As Budger truly says, "The man who invented the two exquisitely apt titles of *All Things Considered* and *A Shilling for My Thoughts* can have no contemptible intelligence."

Thus G. K. C.'s own speculation on the attitudes of possible future biographers in a letter to E. V. Lucas. (The joke is that it was Lucas who had suggested the titles for these early collections of Chesterton's essays.) Lucas replied on a postcard:

> Poor G. K. C. his day is past—
> Now God will know the truth
> at last.

I am afraid that the mocking interchange of 1908 has become the truth of 1974. Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a *figure* in my growing up days, I remember that. The great convert, the devastating critic of all the sins of modernity, a Christian totem in cape and pince-nez to shame the false idols of the intellectuals—Chesterton was the universal object of doting admiration from those charged with my early education. I sense that there must have been a period when I thought he was the greatest intellect of the modern English-speaking world. (But then, when I graduated from high school, I thought Orestes Brownson was the greatest American literary figure of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nineteenth century.) For all that, I can't exactly recall *reading* any Chesterton, except that I know there was a Father Brown story in our reader because I remember the picture. Nor in the intervening years as I have adjusted my evaluations of nineteenth and twentieth century literary figures can I remember having read any Chesterton. Nor in reading this pleasant biography have I been greatly moved to correct this omission.

Chesterton was born May 28, 1874 in Campden Hill, London. His father was the non-working member of a firm of successful estate agents in the Kensington area with all the leisure and sufficient funds to indulge himself in multiple hobbies—the most notable of which was the construction of elaborate toy theaters which were the delight of his children's youth. Gilbert had a younger brother, Cecil, who survived into adulthood and whose own abrasive character, quarrelsome career as a journalist and early death became major determinants in G. K. C.'s life. (Unlike Cecil, Gilbert was a person of exceptionally warm nature who had a sheer genius for the soft answer to wrath despite his fame as a crushing debater.) From a combination of interest, talent, the fact of literary friends and financial necessity, Chesterton drifted into full-time journalism shortly after his marriage to Frances Blogg in 1901. Once launched on the work of a journeyman writer, Chesterton produced in a lifetime an immense output of essays, criticism, poetry, novels, plays, biography, detective stories, travelogues, autobiography, broadcasts, tracts and on and on. Surely one would hope that out of that outpouring something would survive.

It was Frances who applied the epithet "jolly journalist" and she used it in disdain. Her ambitions for her husband were more serious and ambitious; she disliked the roistering, argumentative male company he kept in London with Belloc, Baring, and Bentley. It was a childless marriage dominated by moral faithfulness; affection, not splendid passion. To please Frances he moved to Beaconsfield, twenty-five miles from London in 1909 but his literary life remained essentially in Fleet Street despite books on Victorian literature, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other obviously deep matters. The books were interspersed with Father Brown, polemics with G. B. Shaw and the editorship of Cecil Chesterton's *New Witness* which he took over after his brother's death in 1917 and continued on into financial disaster. Even in his serious works one feels that Chesterton wrote as a "journalist" in the basic sense—*pour la journée*. The journalist commentator who is called upon to formulate opinion out of the tatters of news is always at a disadvantage in joining the immortals. He may write to issues we cannot now appreciate and if he catches the sensibility of his time, that special tone may elude another age. The philosopher of the instant, writing in short compass against the intractable shapelessness of things, is doubly tempted to compression: the phrase, the consummatory line, the right, ringing adjective. Chesterton was noted for his pithy summations of issues on all things great and small. "A great classic is a man whom one can praise without having read. This is not wholly unjust; it merely implies a certain respect for the realization and fixed conclusions of the mass of mankind." Not bad. But truly memorable? Chesterton seems to me to lack the high wit, the deep irony, the bitter sense of the great aphorists. He makes an artful statement but like the Victorian period he loved, everything seems a trifle overstuffed. There is something too assured about his pronouncements; one would call it pompous but for the unfailing geniality of the whole thing.

If a classic is a man one praises without having read, I wonder what G. K. C. would have labeled a man one faults without having read. Barker's biography is reasonably generous in quoting "great lines" from Chesterton and on that evidence I am inclined to put off further reading yet again. As a biography, the book is clear and uncomplicated. Barker presents a straightforward account of the central events of a not very eventful life. This is not a deep biography and after some cautious speculation about G. K. C.'s adolescent sexual fantasies (resurrected from early sketch books) Barker avoids any psychologizing of his subject. His conversion was no great spiritual adventure. Barker, who, as he notes, is the first non-Roman Catholic to write a biography of Chesterton, points out how anomalous all the fuss was about a man who had been well known as a champion of a high church Christianity for years. G. K. C. as a person still seems rather sketchy to me, but what does emerge is a very pleasant figure: a good friend, a faithful husband, an eminently decent human being. One feels that Chesterton characterized himself in his book on Browning when he says in terms of highest compliment, "A poet must by the nature of things be conventional . . . Poetry deals with conventional things—the hunger for bread, the love of woman, the love of children. . . . This must always be remembered of Browning, this ardent and headlong conventionality."

The central Chestertonian theme which runs through his life and his works is the contrast between the distastefulness of modernity and the grace and high courtesy of the middle ages. But his sensibility is not Gothic, but Gothic revival; not Abbot Suger, but Augustus Pugin; not history, but romance. As a boy he had sat for hours watching his father's puppet shows, as an adult he believed a heavenly Father had some equally genial, chivalric script for his creatures. "I regret I have no gloomy and savage father to offer to the public gaze . . . and that I cannot do my duty as a true modern by cursing everyone who made me what I am." Autobiography and theology combine. The Father he sought and the social vision he espoused are the wishes of a great child —and I hasten to add that I mean that without criticism. Many of life's most lovable eccentrics, good fools and great saints preserve a childishness in the face of sensible adult demands. There is of course a kind of pathos if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not tragedy in the figure of the adult-child. Chesterton was so successful in his role: unable to tie his tie, incapable of all adult practicalities, preaching of a fairy tale feudal England—and all this to doting fathers from Edward Chesterton to those latter day fathers who praised his conversion—that the pathos scarcely appears. Perhaps if it had his writing would have lost that strain of happy sententiousness and become more truly thoughtful.

Only rarely does an inner complexity appear in Barker's biography. In the 20's he wrote to Father Ronald Knox: "I am in a state now when I feel a monstrous charlatan, as if I wore a mask and were stuffed with cushions, whenever I see anything about the public G. K. C. . . . I am not troubled about a great fat man who appears on platforms and in caricatures; even when he enjoys controversies on what I believe to be the right side. I am concerned about what became of that little boy whose father showed him a toy theatre, and a schoolboy whom nobody ever heard of with his brooding on doubts . . . and all the morbid life of the lonely mind of a living person with whom I have lived. It is that story, that so often came near to ending badly, that I want to end well." Barker's story is the public story and that story, by and large, went well; the story of the little boy and the toy theatre Barker does not tell and we probably cannot know. The public story of pamphlet and platform—"that day is past;" the inner life of the lonely mind—"God will know the truth at last."

A History of the Society of Jesus

WILLIAM V. BANGERT, S.J.

Institute of Jesuit Sources, $14.75

JOHN RATTE

Though he was not a leading candidate for "Man of the Year," Superior General Pedro Arrupe's gaze fixed *Time* readers from the cover of the April 23 issue of 1973, testimony to the newsworthiness of Jesuits. Should we add, when they are in trouble? Father Bangert's thoughtful history of his order suggests only by indirection how many people in and out of high places have contemplated or engineered with glee times of trouble for these self-appointed soldiers of Christ, world-wanderers since a crippled veteran of the hopeless defense of the citadel of Pamplona had a vision of God on the rocky hillside at Manresa and then moved on to learning at Paris and religious reform at Rome.

The friends of Ignatius made their mark on the post-Lutheran world almost as swiftly as Protestantism itself erupted in western Christendom. And in a larger world as well; though what strikes one about the great Jesuit missionaries is not so much the dimensions or permanence of the Christianity they brought to lands where they lacked political patronage, as the vigor and heroism with which they participated in the great and tragic "discovery" of the world beyond the Continent by Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europeans.

Father Bangert uses a calm and well-ordered prose to recount briefly the foundations of the Order and to point out its novelty in the world of religious institutions shaped by the sedentary Middle Ages. Not that Francis had not also hoped for both mobility and action. But Ignatius was more fortunate than Francis: he was able to organize his own insights, and hence to intentionally calcify, so to speak, what was best in his vision of a full religious vocation lived out in a changing world, freed from canonical hours and monastic customs and from all but a minimum day's total of one hour of formal prayer.

How to organize a history as vast as this? From Japan to North America, from Madurai to Angola, from Ireland to Moscow, and from the 16th century to the present there extends the Jesuit effort to preach the gospel, transform cultures, and, in some distinguished cases, to preach the gospel and live *with* the cultures they found. Father Bangert chooses to organize this complex tale into major periods—establishment, early expansion, baroque flowering, the confrontation with the Enlightenment, suppression and restoration, accommodation to the modern world. With each of his large chapters a sequence is repeated: first a discussion of the Generals and of the internal transformation of the Society, then a rapid survey of the major European areas, and of the non-European world. The reader eager to gain a sequential sense of the role played by the Jesuits in France or Japan must therefore reread the book skipping through the text from section to section; but for Europe at least the discontinuities are much less troubling since in many ways the themes of relation to state power, to reformed Christianity, the theory and practice of education, and the traditions of governance and piety are unified within the European experience. Similarly, the student of the Jesuits' small role in the history of what we now call the Third World can see certain fundamental concerns being pursued in different parts of the globe.

It would be incorrect to say that Jesuits do no wrong in this narrative, but it seems that they are more sinned against than sinning. Father Bangert is eager to point out the moments when the Jesuits, though condemned by their peers, anticipate future orthodoxies, as in his discussion of the position taken by the French members of the society on the relationship between papal power and emerging national sovereignty in the 16th century. He is willing to indict the excessive zeal of the missionaries connected with military expeditions in Angola, when parades festooned with noses cut from dead blacks culminated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a Mass of Thanksgiving and the foundation of a confraternity in honor of Our Lady of Victory; but he is also happy to praise the genius of men like mandarin Ricci in China, or the extraordinary sannyasi Di Nobili in Madurai, who struggled, unsuccessfully, in the last analysis, against Rome's identification of Christianity with western European culture. But he is generally not critical of the extraordinarily destructive impact of Jesuit and all missionary activities on Asian and especially Indo-American cultures; the great debate on the possibility that *indios* might someday be ordained is one part of the grotesque and inescapable inheritance an expanding Europe bequeathed to its 20th century descendants. (Though one is saved from utter depression while reflecting on this matter by his narrative of the argument of José de Acosta, in 1588, that the *indios*, once educated might take their place at the altar: after all, "a barbarous people, worse even than the *indios* of America, the Irish, once they were patiently trained, evolved from their uncivilized state into a fervent and cultivated people.")

Claude Lévi-Strauss argued in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1960 that "Our science arrived at maturity the day that Western man began to see that he would never understand himself as long as there was a single race or people on the surface of the earth that he treated as an object. Only then could anthropology declare itself in its true colors: as an enterprise reviewing and atoning for the Renaissance, in order to spread humanism to all humanity." The Jesuits by and large, like most Christian missionaries, have strived to treat races and peoples, not as objects, but as human persons, as souls. The Jesuits have sought, like Lévi-Strauss' ideal anthropologist, to spread what they regarded as the highest form of humanism to all humanity. Today we distrust ourselves, as Christians, as humanists, especially as 'westerners': we shy away from spreading anything anywhere, lest what we spread maim and destroy in spite of our best intentions. Father Bangert has not set out to write a work that *deals* with these questions, but he has inevitably written one which *raises* them. Di Nobili has his modern successor in Swami Animananda, S.J., just as Bellarmine has his descendants in de Lubac and Rahner (but not in George Tyrrell). The Society goes on, on the forefront, in the storefront, out of the country, into the city, experimenting, looking backwards and forwards at the same time. One suspects that if Christianity survives, the Jesuits will: but for them, as for the church, it will always be a perilous survival unless there is a constant effort to come to terms with the limits of what in a past moment seemed to be an unlimited vision of the good. One could wish that Father Bangert had reflected more on the extra-collegial and extra ecclesiastical *meaning* of this vast human enterprise; but that is the task of the philosopher of history, and there are no such people anyway, only common readers who must be grateful to careful historians for giving them materials with which to hammer out their own moral perspectives.

His Picture in the Papers: A Speculation on Celebrity in America, Based on the Life of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.

RICHARD SCHICKEL

Charterhouse, $5.95

DAVID DENBY

Richard Schickel's new book is short but ambitious, both a biography of one of the first great movie stars and an analysis of the celebrity as a unique 20th century type. The movies of Fairbanks, Sr., aren't that well-known today, but he's a figure very much worth reviving. A classic American good bad boy (born in 1883), Fairbanks was too restless for school (leaving Harvard after three months) or a conventional business career, too vain and exhibitionistic for a life of obscure adventure. The New York theater was Fairbanks' first major arena but his physical energy overwhelmed the stage, and he made the spectators jumpy; Schickel believes, in

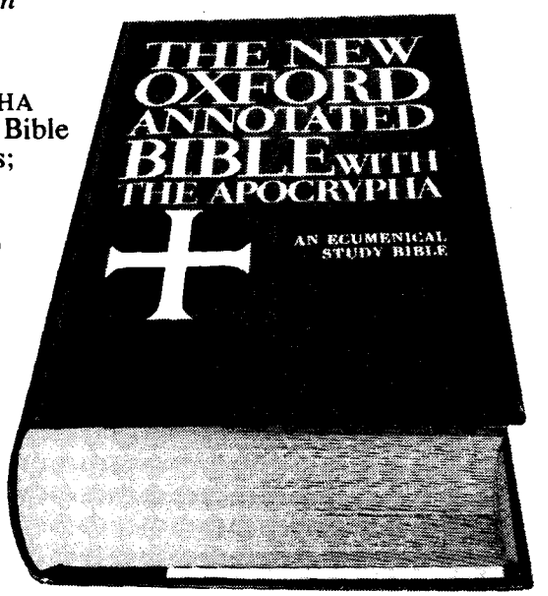
"Cause for rejoicing."

"The appearance of this revision is a cause for rejoicing, as it brings up to date both the latest revisions of the biblical text and the scholarly commentaries."
—*Religious Education*

Edited by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger

More than half a million copies sold (original and new editions) since 1962.

THE NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE WITH THE APOCRYPHA
An ecumenical study Bible
1,936 pages plus maps;
5 3/4" x 8 5/8"
08900A Cloth.
Printed jacket. $11.95



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

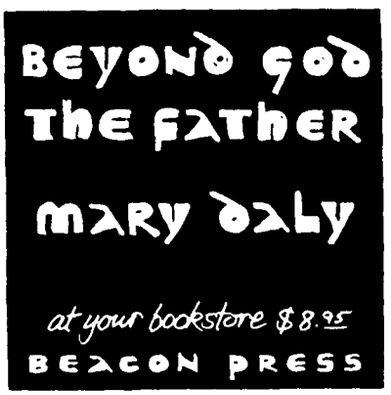
fact, that without the manic athletic fantasy possible in the movies Fairbanks would have been lost. Extroverted, egoistic, good-humored and brutal—a sort of movieland Siegfried—Fairbanks charmed the critics and public from the very beginning of his career. In his early satirical films he played the effete, upper-class playboy, who, when forced to fight and endure (often out West), discovers a talent for daring action and gallantry. Later on, in the heavier costume pictures of the mid-twenties (such as *Robin Hood* and *The Mark of Zorro*), Fairbanks' mood switched from satire to fustian, but the vaunting physical style remained as exhilarating as ever.

But Fairbanks, like so many American actors, never developed or deepened; he simply aged, and when he lost absolute control over his machine-like athlete's body, his morale cracked. Schickel views the star's humiliating final decade (Fairbanks died in 1939) with a tender solicitude that becomes rather touching, interpreting his decline as the inevitable result of America's over-insistent optimism and youth worship.

In a short biography an author may bring out the peculiar meaning of the subject's life—the parable enmeshed in the facts—with bolder emphasis than usual; the weakness of the form is that the subject may not be drawn with enough idiosyncratic detail to emerge as a convincing human being. Given the glut of trivial movie books, Schickel was wise to keep the biographical material short and sweet; indeed, we do not want a lot of driveling "facts" about Fairbanks and Mary Pickford and life at Pickfair and the rest. The book is written with elegance and tact; nevertheless, Fairbanks himself remains something of a projection, an argument. As the interpretive pattern (the quintessential rise and fall of a celebrity) closes in on the subject in his later years, we get further and further away from Fairbanks the man. One wonders, when Schickel describes Fairbanks as a totally public personality with no inner life to speak of, whether that image doesn't suit the modesty of his research.

Schickel is best as social historian and commentator on the peculiar nature of stardom as a career. Fairbanks' union with Mary Pickford in 1920 solidified his position among the new café-society elites of the 20's (athletes, writers, gangsters, etc.) which replaced the well-born "400" of previous decades. Royally sallying forth from Pickfair to lay cornerstones, sell war bonds, and so on, Fairbanks and Pickford conveyed a new respectability on a mass entertainment form run by immigrant Jews and attended, for the most part, by the urban working class. At the same time they gathered a formidable entourage of swells and hangers-on. But as Schickel shrewdly points out, the conditions of extreme celebrityhood are enough to destroy all but the very toughest performers; once he arrives, it becomes impossible for the celebrity to develop or learn because he never experiences anything but his own well-knownness.

Schickel's book captures very powerfully that ambivalence of attraction and disgust we all feel towards the media-celebrity system of the 20th century—that monstrous confluence of magazines, newspapers, broadcasting and film which has created a new status and political system based on contrived "personality," a new way of evaluating the importance of ideas, movements and men. The media are now our "second reality" (Schickel), and Fairbanks, who helped initiate a part of the system and became its victim, was an earlier version of the prisoner we all have become.



REVIEWERS

DENNIS O'BRIEN is Dean of Middlebury College in Vermont.

JOHN RATTE is Chairman of the Department of History at Amherst College in Massachusetts.

DAVID DENBY is the editor of *Film 72/73*, an anthology of criticism (Bobbs-Merrill).

BERNARD BERGONZI is the author of *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the First World War*. His most recent works are *The Situation of the Novel* and *T. S. Eliot*.

The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War

ALBERT MARRIN

Duke University Press, $9.75

BERNARD BERGONZI

Later this year people in England will be celebrating, if that is the right word, the sixtieth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The current preoccupation with that crucial period is not diminishing with the passing of time; if anything, the reverse. The other evening, for instance, BBC-TV put on a fascinating program about the Zeppelin raids on England during the war, including clips of ancient newsreels and interviews with aged but articulate eyewitnesses of the raids. Mr. Marrin's book, however, does much more than minister to casual curiosity or historical nostalgia. It is a solidly documented work of historical scholarship which at the same time tells a very absorbing story. One says 'story' advisedly: for all his scrupulous attention to source material, whether printed or in manuscript, Mr. Marrin remains aware that history= *histoire*, and that there is, or should be, a story concealed within the most sober historical narrative. Mr. Marrin tells it with lucidity and vigor. Unlike some American writers on English life and culture Mr. Marrin seems totally inward with his material, with a real understanding of the intimidating nuances of English social and intellectual life. At the same time, he is able to achieve a judicious detachment that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would be very hard for an Englishman; if the Church of England is not what it was, it is still enough of a presence to evoke a certain bias towards defense or obloquy in English writers.

Mr. Marrin tells a sad but compelling story of the corruption of a great Christian body under the pressure of the times. The corruption arose, not because the Church supported the British war effort—it could hardly have done otherwise—but because it perverted, instead of upholding, Christian principles in the course of doing so. History had given the Church of England a unique situation: the monarch was its titular head and it had a privileged position in every aspect of the national life, providing spiritual validation to the actions of the state while, on occasion, allowing itself to be subordinated to secular ends, in traditional Erastian fashion. This is nicely illustrated in Mr. Marrin's book by an anecdote about a general addressing a group of chaplains before an engagement: "I told them on one occasion that I wanted a bloodthirsty sermon next Sunday, and would not have any texts from the New Testament . . . On that Sunday I got hold by accident of a blushing young curate straight out from England—but he preached the most bloodthirsty sermon I had ever listened to."

In August 1914 there was an astonishingly rapid transformation of attitudes, in the Church of England, running parallel to the feeling in the population as a whole. As Mr. Marrin shows in his opening chapters, the Church had no reason to feel warlike in the summer of 1914. Indeed, Germany was widely admired as a cultured Protestant nation, in a spirit of pro-German sentiment reaching back to Carlyle and Coleridge, while the Kaiser was spoken of as a model of an enlightened Christian monarch. Belgium, on the other hand, in whose defense Britain declared war on Germany, was not much admired in the pre-war years, being held responsible for the odious atrocities committed by King Leopold's agents in the Congo. But once war broke out the Kaiser quickly became anti-Christ and Belgium a saintly martyr amongst nations. For a few months responsible Anglican leaders tried to preserve and implement the traditional Catholic beliefs about the Just War, limiting and regulating the methods of warfare; indeed, until well into the war the bishops refused to countenance the taking of reprisals against the enemy's civilian population. For a time it was possible to regard the Germans as human enemies to be treated with respect; bitterly misguided in their ideas and aims, no doubt, but still fundamentally human. Yet during the autumn of 1914 the reports of German atrocities in Belgium, some authentic, but many more invented, and particularly the destruction of Louvain (in purely tactical terms a colossal blunder by the Germans), caused an uncontrolled wave of hysteria to sweep through England. Thereafter the Germans were seen as fiends in human form, the Kaiser as literally anti-Christ, and the war, instead of being a Just War to be carefully fought with limited methods for defined aims, was turned into a Holy War or Crusade against evil incarnate, precisely like a Moslem *jihad*. Indeed, in true Islamic style the soldiers at the front were assured of instant salvation if they died in battle, since the Allied cause was entirely and without qualification God's cause. Killing Germans was a hallowed activity, a belief given powerful literary expression in Kipling's story of 1915, 'Mary Postgate.' These feelings were largely confined to the civilians and the high-up military; the soldiers and junior officers who were actually doing the fighting continued to treat the war as simply an unpleasant task to be gotten through and found the Germans human enough, as in the Christmas Truce of 1914.

One man who tried to resist the prevalent hysteria and the tendency to give it a Christian sanction, was Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He figures impressively in Mr. Marrin's book; although an unquestioning patriot and supporter of the war effort, he was a force for reason and moderation, who remained true to traditional Christian principles in such small but vital ways as trying to obtain humane treatment for conscientious objectors. Unlike many of his fellow-bishops he spoke with a recognizably Christian voice. But it was scarcely heard. The escalation of feeling continued throughout the war until following civilian deaths in German air-raids, a clergyman, writing in an ecclesiastical journal, could argue with fervent sophistry that German civilian deaths were now justified including, as an unpleasant necessity, those of children. Not a large claim compared with what was to happen in the Second World War, but at least no one tried to find a theological justification for Dresden or Hiroshima.

origins weekly documentation on today's church • a service for homilists, discussion groups, educators, diocesan and parish pastoral councils, religious, librarians, and many others • designed with usefulness in mind • puts you in touch with the sources of current religious news and trends • quarterly indexing • weekly cross-referencing • shows how news events are part of ongoing discussions • on prepunched 8 1/2" x 11" pages • gets you to the information you need when you need it • 48 times yearly • just $39 • enter a trial subscription now • or write for sample issues...

Gentlemen: Please enter my subscription to **ORIGINS** *for one year. I understand that if I am not satisfied after examining the first 3 issues, I may cancel this subscription and owe nothing.*

☐ *Check or money order for $39 enclosed—full payment;* ☐ *Bill me for $39 for one year's service**

Name _____ *Address* _____ *City* _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

National Catholic News Service • 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W. • Wash.. D.C. 20005 **(foreign: additional postage)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Though writing history, Mr. Marrin touches on theology and social psychology. Certainly there was something pathological about the state of mind of a large part of the British population during the war, and the Church of England made little effort to resist it, still less to correct it. If the war was truly a Just War—and there was some reason to see the defense of Belgium as such— then the Church should have held on to that ideal, whatever the prevalent climate of opinion. But the Church of England as a patriotic national church was, lamentably if understandably, unable to accept the challenge. Instead it surrendered to the totalitarian mentality which was perhaps the worst of all the grim results of the First World War, and one which has plagued humanity for sixty years.

Classified

RATES: 50c a word, one time; 48c, three times; 45c, seven times; 42c, thirteen times. Twelve words minimum. For box numbers add 50c per insertion.

Printing

YOUR BOOK PRINTED from well-typed manuscript. Economical. BIOGRAPHY PRESS, Rt. 1, Box 745, Aransas Pass, Texas 78336.

1,000 BUSINESS CARDS, $5.95. Printing. Free Samples. ALAN WOOD, Dept. C, 57-22 163rd Street, Flushing, N.Y. 11365.

Liturgy

NEW! A PRACTICAL MAGAZINE for everyone interested in liturgy resources: songs, poems, art, and ideas, plus informative articles. One year (8 issues), $8.00 ($9.00 foreign). Write FOLK MASS AND MODERN LITURGY, P.O. Box 444, Saratoga, Calif. 95070.

Oxford

"TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY." Oxford Summer Schools, July 5-19, 1974. Energy/Alternative Technology / Education / Communities / Decentralisation/Distinguished Lecturers/Group Work/Visits. $250 inclusive. Information: 9 Morton Avenue, Kidlington, Oxford, England.

Vocations

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEEK GOD as a monk, praying and working in the warm fellowship of a small Catholic monastery of the English Benedictine Congregation with an active and varied ministry, including the conduct of a college preparatory school? Write Father Luke Rigby, Box 27311, St. Louis, Missouri 63141.

Institutes

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Sixth Annual Institute, August 11-16. Revs. Carroll Stuhlmueller, James Reese and Robert Karris. Write Sister Marianna, COLLEGE MISERICORDIA, Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612.

BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, Trinity College, Burlington, Vermont 05401. June 9-14. WRIGHT, MURPHY, O'CONNOR, SUELZER, COLLINS, MINEAR. Write: Director.

Ecumenical Conference

"AGREED STATEMENT on Ministry and Ordination: Anglican/Roman Catholic Convergence." April 1-3, 1974. GRAYMOOR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE, Garrison, N.Y. 10524. 914-424-3671.

Dig Wells

7 SUB-SAHARA COUNTRIES stricken with severe drought! Water urgently needed for drinking, cooking, bathing, irrigating. Send contributions for digging wells and saving human lives to: MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA, 1622-21st St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 51)

The excuse Baum offers is itself existentialist and squarely positioned in situation ethics. He is saying that the situation of human nature is changing to such an extent that homosexuality need no longer be flatly rejected.

Prisons are full of people possessing human nature. It may be second nature for a kleptomaniac or a nymphomaniac to indulge their specialties but it would be less than rational for the rest of us to accept these aberrations as normal behavior.

Baum is correct in stating that "in recent years the argument from nature has become somewhat problematic in Catholic theology." He should know because he is in the forefront of those who have made it so. A problem is not really a problem until it is put in terms which admit of a solution. What confronts Gregory is not a problem but a dilemma.

(REV.) RUDOLF HARVEY, O.F.M.
Editor, *Friar* Magazine

Hyattsville, Md.

To the Editors: I find many difficulties with the position of Gregory Baum on homosexuality [Jan. 15]. Implicit in his praise of the *Dignity* statement is the conclusion that two homosexuals have the same rights to genital acts as married people. As it is currently understood, however, Christian sexuality presupposes a man-woman marital relationship with homosexual unions justified by some authors on a lesser of two evils type of reasoning. If one accepts Vatican II's teaching on Christian Marriage (*Church in the Modern World*, 47-52), he finds no ground for approval of homosexual "marriages." If, however, one subscribes to the principle that the basic reality is change, and that everything, including norms of sexuality and marriage is in process, one can approve various forms of sexual activity as developments of ever changing human nature. These problems I have explored elsewhere (*American Ecclesiastical Review*, Nov., 1973; *Marriage*, Jan., 1974).

Here I should like to question Baum on his attempt to root a homosexual union in mutuality. Let us presuppose that Baum's mutuality includes mutual understanding, psychological intimacy and reciprocity of feeling, elements found in many marriages, and in many other relationships between members of the same or opposite sex. But many male homosexuals will testify that they have not been able to attain mutuality. Anonymity, impersonality, masochism, and promiscuity plague homosexual relationships. In many conversations with homosexuals over the past eighteen years I have been told that this is one of their greatest difficulties: the inability to form deep friendships with men despite longstanding efforts. Instead of mutuality these men have found in overt practices only *temporary* release from compulsion. An abundant literature tends to confirm my impressions. To be sure, as Baum points out, we need more empirical data, particularly, in my judgment, on the *interior* aspects of homosexual relationships.

I believe that many homosexuals are afraid of mutuality or spiritual intimacy. Their activity is self-defeating. Indulgence in the genital act (whatever its variations) is escape from confrontation with self and others. How else explain the frenzied pattern of "cruising," typical of male homosexuals? Cruising is searching for a one-act-stand partner, an action between two strangers who do not want to know one another. I suggest that research seek to discover how a homosexual can learn to love himself and others in a truly human way. A vista has been opened by Jacob Dominian in *St. Anthony's Messenger*, June, 1973.

Again, blaming the hostility of society for the problems of the homosexual is increasingly off-target. The homosexual must come to terms with himself in some real human relationships which do not include genital activity. However laudable many of the aims of *Dignity*, their advocacy of faithful homosexual unions is misguided. Much good can come, however, from their willingness to dialogue with people

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who care enough to *express* disagreement. (REV.) JOHN F. HARVEY, O.S.F.S.
De Sales Hall School of Theology

Johnstown, N.Y.

To the Editors: If Gregory Baum ["Catholic Homosexuals," Feb. 15] were alive during the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, it is possible that none of them would have reached the Promised Land to claim it, but thanks to our Lord who in His wisdom explicitly forbade sexual intercourse between men, the children of Israel were able to cross the Jordan.

Contrary to Father Baum's slight reference to Scripture, God himself expressly spoke on homosexuality in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and Paul in Romans 1:27 was referring to this and not his own thinking.

I greet Father Baum's expression of compassion for the homosexual, as most certainly there needs to be an understanding of the problem in Christianity, but I regret that he chooses a humanistic approach to debate the issue. His arguments from the point of nature do not carry the weight and certainly negate the biological factor, which, obviously, speaks for itself.

It is time that we took Scriptures for what they are, the divinely inspired Word of God, which brings us life and health (Proverbs 4:22). Scripture teaches us not to hate the person, but the sin. From there we see that adequate counseling and solutions are held in Scriptures to all of mankind's problems. To operate apart from the Word of God is to only live in the system of the world which John rightly condemns as being apart from God.

God is love and one cannot imagine love leaving people caught up in homosexuality. God has provided the complete and full answers to this problem, which most certainly is not unique or culturally appointed to North America. Christ said that men do err not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God, and that power of God can deliver us.

STEPHEN J. MEYERS, JR.

Reply

These three letters are written with a good deal of compassion for homosexual men and women. Yet reading them carefully we notice that Father R. Harvey likens them to criminals, Father J. Harvey describes them as mentally unbalanced, and Mr. Meyers thinks of them as sinners. These are indeed the traditional categories: criminals, sick, sinners. Are we sure that this is the content of the gospel for homosexuals? Is this all the Christian Church can tell the hundreds of thousands of homosexual men and women, good and dedicated people, working in our society in every profession and every trade, as lawyers, doctors, clergymen, as artists, businessmen, engineers, as teachers, construction workers, etc.?

GREGORY BAUM

Volunteer Army

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: "Can the Army Survive VOLAR?" [Jan. 18], Michael T. Klare overlooks one vital point. He leads the reader to think that the Volunteer Army concept will not make it unless enlistment standards are lowered, the size of the services is reduced, and/or there is some sort of draft system supplementing voluntary enlistments.

He should also consider the possibility that the Army in general, and USAREC (United States Army Recruiting Command) in particular, are learning as they move along with this program, and indeed they are.

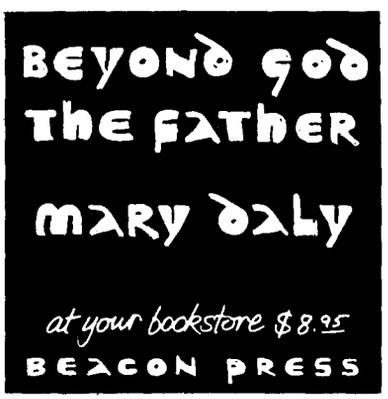
The months of November and December saw USAREC for the first time reach or exceed its quota with performances of 104 percent and 102 percent. It would be foolhardy for anyone to think that VOLAR would be an instant success. It always takes time to put a large, complex organization in place, give it a new mission and program, staff it with the right number and quality of personnel, and give that staff all the support it needs. It also takes time to find out what the right mix of marketing effort (advertising, product offering, face-to-face recruiting, etc.) will produce the desired results. It furthermore takes time to research and analyze an operation, correct its shortcomings, and/or seize new opportunities.

The performance indicators in November and December lead one to believe that USAREC is learning fast and well. We should all hope that the trend continues and that VOLAR proves to be successful. The country can ill afford the obvious alternatives if the VOLAR does not, in fact, work out.

JOSEPH E. CONNOLLY

17-Issue Trial, $3

Return coupon from back cover



For Libraries:
Commonweal on Microfilm

More than 1,200 College, School and Public libraries use the microfilm edition for reference in this complete and compact form. Commonweal subscribers may purchase current and past volumes at the following prices:

November, 1924 to March, 1960
4-volume sets (2 years), $24.20

Current volumes, March 1960 to date,
$6.20 a year (2 vols.)

Address orders and inquiries to:

Xerox University Microfilm
300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106

PEACE CORPS & VISTA NEED YOU! Volunteer your skills & experience in developing nations overseas and U.S. Join the universal struggle for human dignity—through education, skilled trades, agriculture, engineering, business, urban planning, medicine & other fields of community development. One or two years. Expenses paid—medical, travel, vacation, living. Information: Bruce Mazzie, ACTION, OCP Box P-5, Washington, D.C. 20525.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Did You Miss . . .

- Pentagon Spies at the White House, by *Peter J. Ognibene*
- The Vatican, by *Peter Hebblethwaite*
- Energy: End of an Era? by *Michael Kennedy*
- Divorce and Remarriage, by *David S. Toolan, S.J.*
- Last Week's Special Issue on Postwar Vietnam
- America as Monastery, by *Eugene Bianchi*
- The Politics of Hunger, by *Richard J. Neuhaus*
- Catholic Homosexuals, by *Gregory Baum, O.S.A.*
- Britain in Crisis, by *Brian Wicker*
- Women in the Priesthood, by *Clara Maria Henning*

. . . in recent issues of Commonweal?

For political, cultural and religious insights of a similar caliber, send coupon, save 64% of the single-copy price.

17 Issues for $3

FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016

Please send the next 17 issues to:

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip Code**_____

☐ **I prefer a full year's subscription at $14.**

3/22/74

412

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED